

Vance C. Smith, Jr., Commissioner



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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July 19, 2011

Honorable Saxby Chambliss
U. S. Senate
416 Senate Russell Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1007

Honorable Johnny Isakson
U. S. Senate
120 Senate Russell Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1007

Dear Senators Chambliss and Isakson:

We thank you for agreeing to cosponsor Senator Coburn's companion bill to HR 1585, the State Transportation Flexibility Act. We believe this bill sends a strong message of state and local government frustration with burdensome federal regulations and administrative procedures and "political" mandates that add large time delays and dollars costs to transportation project development and delivery. Allowing states to opt out of the federal program would be a bold step to address these inefficiencies but states could, and we believe would, continue to provide essential environmental protection, public participation and other social objectives of their citizens. We are hopeful that Congress will respond to the call – by a broad range of interests – to streamline the numerous cumbersome processes involved in utilizing federal transportation funding. Clearly great improvements can be made while maintaining essential protections.

As a donor state, the bill's provision that all Highway Trust Fund–Highway Account user fee revenue attributable to a state would be available for highway improvements in that state is obviously very attractive as well. As you know, Georgia has long sought to increase its rate of return in order to better meet the needs of our growing population.

We believe your cosponsoring this bill will help achieve one of GDOT's key surface transportation reauthorization objectives – to substantively streamline transportation project development. Thank you for your continuing support of Georgia transportation interests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Vance", written in black ink.

Vance C. Smith, Jr.
Commissioner

VCS:DHG:dg
cc: Todd Smith, Governor's Director of Federal Relations